

Friis, John

From: Charlotte Dillon [charlotted3@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, March 15, 2009 11:31 PM
To: Friis, John
Subject: HB 6666 Sect. 5: In Support of ECA

Dear Mr. Friis,

I am a junior in the creative writing department at the Educational Center for the Arts. I was told to email you regarding my experience as a student at ECA, so here it is:

ECA is the best thing that has ever happened to me. In the morning, I'm a student at Wilbur Cross High School in New Haven, where I'm herded through a metal detector and pushed through a giant mass of people in the hallways. I have to show my school I.D. and punch my code into keypads in order to get lunch. I don't think I'd be able to make it through the school day if I didn't know I'd be coming to ECA in the afternoon. There, I am a person rather than a number, and I'm given individualized attention by my teachers.

I've learned so much about the process and craft of writing through reading other texts (professional and intradepartmental) as well as reading the detailed comments my teachers give me on my own writing. It is to them that I owe all the success I've had. I've won golden key awards from the Scholastic writing competition, and been a finalist in the IMPAC writing awards. The other day, I received a call saying that I had won a \$200 prize for a memoir I wrote for the Thornton Wilder competition, which I plan on spending on attending the New England Young Writer's Conference at Breadloaf. I would never have entered these competitions or received any sort of recognition if it weren't for my teachers. Since they are practicing artists themselves, they are able to teach us about how to get published. It is evident that this style of teaching has an effect since ECA wins more of these contests than any other school.

I will not be at ECA once teachers (may) be required to be certified. Even so, I want to help advocate for continuing the system in place because it is what makes ECA so great. I know that if I had the kind of writing classes taught by my English teachers, I wouldn't want to come back. The education wouldn't be the same, and ECA wouldn't be worth attending.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Dillon